



SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COMMITTEE FOR FISHERIES (STECF)

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Opinion by written procedure

Request for a complementary in-year management advice for sandeel in the North Sea and Skagerrak (STECF-OWP-11-03)

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MARCH 2011

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OPINION OF THE SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COMMITTEE FOR FISHERIES BY WRITTEN PROCEDURE

Request for a complementary in-year management advice for sandeel in the North Sea and Skagerrak

MARCH 2011

Background and request to STECF

The STECF advice on sandeel delivered on 24 February endorses ICES' opinion that there should be no catches in management area 3. However, in response to ICES' view that a monitoring fishery in area 3 might be appropriate, Denmark has suggested that a catch limit of 12,000 tonnes could be allowed in order to facilitate such a fishery.

The STECF is asked to advise by 18 March 2011, on whether a monitoring fishery in management area 3 would be appropriate in 2011, and if so, what catch limit should be attached to it.

STECF response

In February 2011 ICES issued the following advice (ICES 2011) for sandeel in area 3 (SA3) of the North Sea:

“ICES advises on the basis of the MSY approach that no catches of sandeel in area 3 should be allowed in 2011.

To protect the stock on a local scale, management should be implemented on the area level.”

In response to a request from the Commission in February 2011 (STECF, 2011), STECF reviewed the ICES advice and endorsed that advice for sandeel in area 3 of the North Sea with the following comment:

“STECF agrees with the ICES assessment of the state of the stock and the advice for 2011.”

STECF notes that in 2010, ICES concluded that the dredge survey estimates of the incoming year class appeared to have been less robust for area 3 and that it was therefore appropriate that in-season monitoring (e.g. acoustic monitoring and age-based commercial cpue) continue in area 3.

While acknowledging that the very low dredge survey index for the 2010 year class might reflect very low recruitment or poor survey coverage, STECF considers that its advice not to allow any catches of sandeel from area 3 of the North Sea in 2011 is appropriate, especially given that the latest assessment indicates that even with a zero TAC in 2011, a recruitment greater than 60% of the long-term average would be required to increase SSB above $MSY B_{escapement}$ in 2012.

However, as outlined by ICES the assessment of the sandeel stock in area 3 is less robust than the assessments for area 1 and 2 and is dependent on in-year CPUE data from the commercial fishery. A complete closure of the EU sandeel fishery in area 3 will therefore compromise ICES' ability to assess the state of the sandeel stock at the end of 2011 and provide appropriate management advice for 2012. A restricted monitoring fishery in 2011 would provide essential information for such an assessment.

STECF therefore advises that a limited monitoring fishery for sandeel in area 3 in 2011 would be appropriate to provide essential CPUE data for an assessment of the stock of sandeel in area 3 at the end of 2011 and provision of management advice for 2012.

STECF also advises that a monitoring fishery should aim to provide the CPUE data required for the assessment but catches should be restricted to a level that does not constitute a risk to the stock. STECF notes that according to the forecast table provided by ICES for area 3, a catch of 10,000 t in 2011 would result in a fishing mortality of $F=0.1$ and a reduction in the spawning stock biomass of 5% compared to the no fishing scenario. STECF therefore advises that catches of sandeel from a monitoring fishery in area 3 in 2011 should not be allowed to exceed 10,000 t.

References

ICES (2011). Sandeel in the Central Eastern North Sea (SA 3). Section 6.4.21.3 ICES Advice 2011, Book 6.

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Abstract

The Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries gave its opinion by written procedure in March 2011 on request by the European Commission on complementary in-year management advice for sandeel in the North Sea and Skagerrak.

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